(b) whether China is all set to become the country's largest trading partner;

(c) whether contours of powerful Pan Asian economic grouping JACIK (Japan ASEAN China India and Korea) are fast emerging;

(d) whether Indo-Sino trade has recorded 100% growth from $ 7.6 billion to over $ 13 billion;

(e) if so, whether India and China carried out first ever strategic dialogue in New Delhi in January, 2005; and

(f) whether it has been agreed to improve trade between JACIK?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It is the constant endeavor of the Government to build long term and sustainable economic relations with its neighbours including China.

(c) The idea of a Pan Asian economic grouping like JACIK is one among several similar suggestions like ASEAN plus 1, ASEAN plus 3 etc. under consideration in different forums.

(d) The Indo-China trade is expected to cross 10 billion mark during 2004-05 for the first time as against US$ 7.007 billion in 2003-04.

(e) No, Sir.

(f) Does not arise.

Misusing of provisions of iron ore Export

1573. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that certain unscrupulous exporters have been found misusing the policy provisions of export of iron ore;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether to control the magnitude of misuse, Government propose to impose restrictions on exports of this ore; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Recently test checks of

consignments of iron ore exports was conducted. Except in one case, the others were found in conformity with the obligations of the Foreign Trade Policy.

(b) Adjudication proceedings against the firm are in progress.

(c) and (d) The Export Policy for export of high quality iron ore for the year 2005-06 is still under formulation.

Steps to boost foundry industry

1574. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that country's foundry is on the upbeat both in the domestic and export sectors;

(b) whether Government propose to help this sector in infrastructure development to bring this out of the recession; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) As per the information available with the Institute of Indian Foundrymen, the total production and export of castings from India is as given below:

India: Total Production and Exports of Castings

	Unit	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Production of castings	Million Tonnes	3.120	3.155	3.509	4.038
Exports of castings	Rs. crore	1243.61	1402.78	1548.85	2008.50

(b) and (c) Under Industrial Infrastructure Upgradation Scheme (IIUS) of the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, there is a provision for providing quality infrastructure in functional clusters/locations of industries including foundry industry. The Budget for 2005-06 has envisaged duty reduction in customs duty on certain items, which would have a favourable impact on foundry industry as a whole. In particular, customs duty on metals and their inputs has been reduced to 10 per cent from 15 and in case of cooking coal of high ash content to 5 per cent from 15 per cent.